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For Immediate Release

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Arc Riverside to Hold Free Workshop on FASD Prevention

Riverside, CA – Arc Riverside, a local non-profit agency, will hold a free one-day workshop on the prevention of Fetal Alcohol Spectrum Disorders (FASD). The workshop is designed for potential and current administrators and instructors of Arc Riverside's Fetal Alcohol Spectrum Teaching and Research Awareness Campaign (FASTRAC) – a peer taught curriculum currently being used in high school classrooms throughout the county.

The event will take place Saturday, April 26 from 8:30 a.m. to 1 p.m. for the first session, and from 1 p.m. to 3 p.m. for the second session, and will be held at the Riverside Community Health Foundation auditorium, located inside Riverside Community Hospital at 4445-A Magnolia Avenue in Riverside.

The FASTRAC curriculum makes up the education portion of Arc Riverside's NineZero Project, a FASD prevention effort that seeks to spread the NineZero message: Nine Months. Zero Alcohol. This means, that for the nine months a woman is pregnant, she will commit to drinking zero alcohol.

The morning session of the workshop will focus on the FASTRAC curriculum and ways to implement the overall NineZero Project throughout the community. Peer students will be involved in this dynamic presentation. The NineZero team of Arc Riverside will introduce new features of the curriculum that enhance the peer teaching experience. The team will also illustrate how to involve young people in NineZero activities beyond the classroom and reveal new facets of the NineZero prevention effort including the new NineZero Video Contest. Arc Riverside will introduce new FASTRAC materials focusing on women in recovery and share some of the factors that make this group unique. Arc Riverside will end with a presentation on fundraising as a way to keep the NineZero Project alive over time.

Arc Riverside will then meet with the NineZero advisory committee and discuss accomplishments of the Project to date under a grant with the State Council on Developmental Disabilities.

In addition to FASTER, the NineZero Project is comprised of public service announcements featuring Olympic athletes and everyday people concerned about FASD, an interactive Web site (www.NineZero.org), and NineZero promotional items geared toward teens and young adults like T-shirts and tank tops as well as temporary tattoos and buttons.

Several researchers have estimated the incidence of FASD to be at least 1 in 100 people. [Sampson 1997, May 2002] For subsequent (siblings of firstborn) children born to mothers who drink during pregnancy, that rate jumps to 77 in 100 people. [Streissguth] This is a staggering figure and one that merits immediate attention. This attention will be given to this group through our proposed grant. In the state of California that means that at least 365,000 citizens are struggling in life because of prenatal exposure to alcohol. The rate is likely to continue to remain high; surveys demonstrate that the rate of alcohol use by women of childbearing years is 55% [Tsai 2004] and that binge use of alcohol is increasing (13.1%). [March of Dimes PeriStat]

While prenatal exposure to alcohol is the number one cause of developmental disabilities in the United States, it is totally preventable. Many children can be spared a lifelong sentence of living with a disability or an irreversible physical or mental condition through education and prevention. County health and social service personnel are seeing many of the problems drinking during pregnancy causes and are involved with Arc Riverside in this county-wide effort as well as their own prevention efforts. Individuals born with prenatal exposure to alcohol represent some of their toughest cases. It follows the burden on taxpayers because of this public health problem is enormous.

The Arc of Riverside is a 54 year-old non-profit organization that provides services, supports and advocacy for individuals with intellectual and developmental disabilities and their families throughout Western Riverside County, and is located at 8138 Mar Vista Court, Riverside, CA 92504.

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